Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) had requested the Deptt. of Food & Civil. Supplies to furnish a factual report on the wheat import deal and accordingly the requisite report was furnished to CVC on 6th May, 1998 by that Deptt. Central Bureas, Investigation (CBI) sought relevant records regarding import of wheat by STC and the Ministries of Commerce and Food have made these available to CBI. Based on an assurance given by the Minister of Food & Consumer Affairs during the discussions on a calling Attention Motion regarding import of wheat on 9.6.98, necessary action is being taken by the Deptt. of Food & Civil Supplies.

A quantity of 7.53 lakh MT of wheat has arrived at the Indian Ports as on 22.6.98.

(c) STC contracted for import of 15 lakh tonnes of wheat from Australia on FOB basis @ US $ 142.50 per tonne during 1998-99.

(d) and (e) The stocks of wheat in the central pool as on 1st January, 1998 was 67.56 lakh tonnes as against 77 lakh tonnes required to be maintained as per the buffer stock norms prescribed. Due to the untimely rains during the sowing season, the Ministry of Agriculture had initially estimated that production of wheat during 1997-98 (marketed during 1998-99) was likely to be 64.51 million tonnes as against the production of 69.27 million tonnes during the previous year. After considering the relevant factors, the Govt, decided to import upto 20 lakh tonnes of wheat during 1998-99, against which STC has already contracted for import of 15 lakh tonnes of wheat from Australia.

Export Potential of Information Technology

2149. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made of the export potential of the Information Technology from India;

(b) if so, the details of the Droad pattern emerging for the different regions of the World, say, for the next ten years; and

(c) the steps being taken to identify and encourage Indian software and other services in Information Technology available in specific regions/towns of the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes, Sir. Department of Electronics and Electronics Computer Software Export Promotion Council have made the assessment.

(b) ^Presently the major markets for exports in this sector are USA, Canada, Europe, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Asia etc. More than 80% of our exports are going to above mentioned countries. Efforts are being made to develop Africa, Latin America, Russia, CIS, Middle East, Japan, Korea and Far East as our future markets.

(c) Department of Electronics has already established 7 Software Technology Parks (STPs) one each at Bangalore, Bhubneshwar, Hyderabad, Gandhinagar, Noida, Pune and Thiruvananthapuram.

DOE has formulated policy guideline for providing assistance to new STPs promoted with state initiative. Under this provision, new STPs have been supported one each at Mohali (Punjab), Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra).

Export of non-basmati rice

2150. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for sharp fluctuations in the exports of rice, particularly, non-basmati rice in the recent past;

(b) whether the credibility of the country is suffering because of undependable supplies; and